

# TOWNLEY

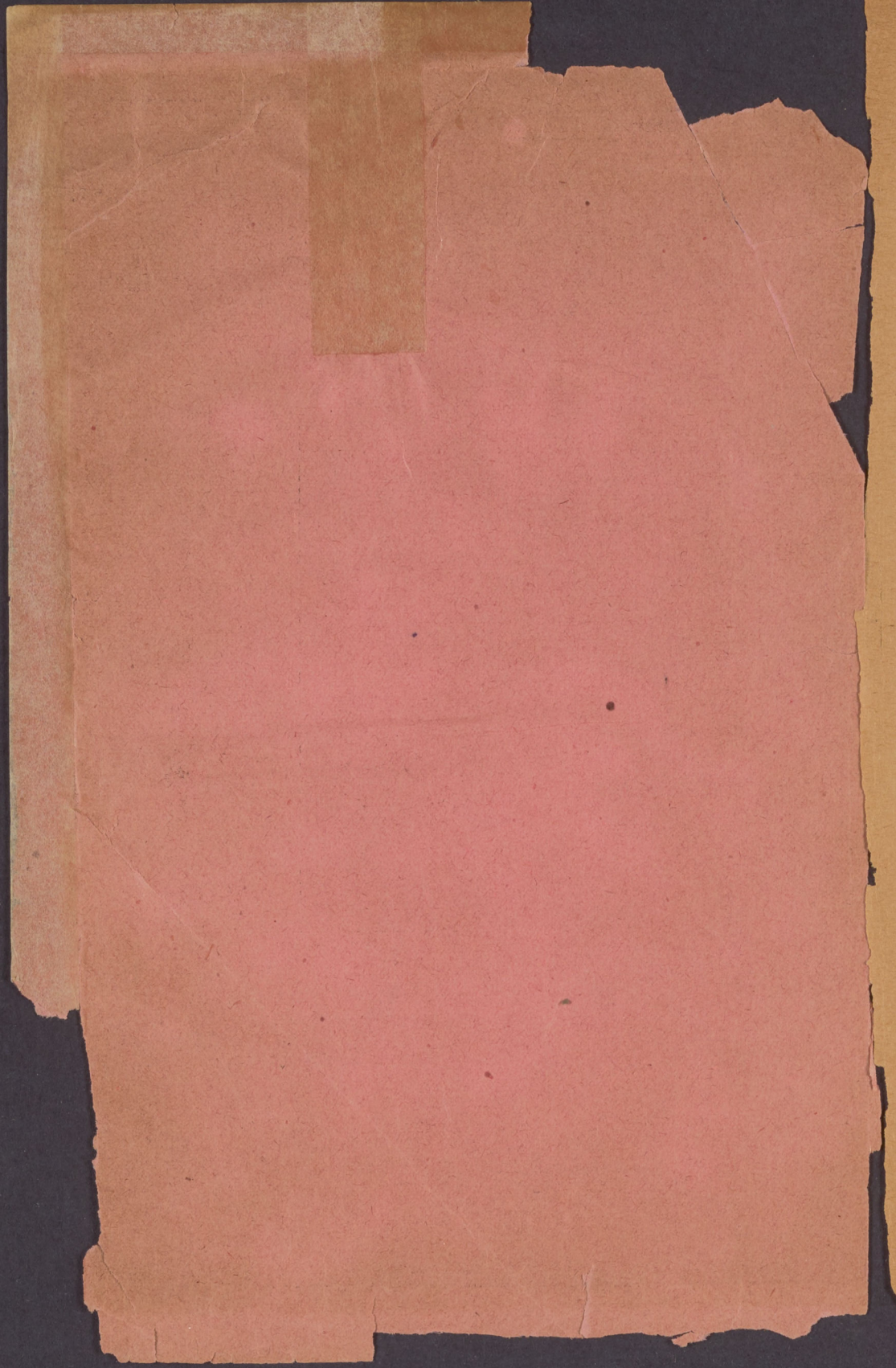
& Co. and the



J. W. BRINTON

# NONPARTISAN LEAGUE







# Townley & Co.

*Frost, James*

and the  
Nonpartisan League

BEACH PUBLICITY ASSOCIATION

Beach, North Dakota



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## INTRODUCTION

THE undersigned, farmers of Lone Tree Township, in the County of Golden Valley, and State of North Dakota, have read and are fully acquainted with the contents of the publication entitled *Townley & Co.*

This little book was published for the purpose of enlightening our fellow farmers, and not for the benefit of any politicians or candidates for office. The political and financial career of Townley and Brinton were commenced in this valley, and their records are well known to the citizens of this county. If the statements herein are not true, the courts are open. And an invitation to an action in court is cordially extended to Townley and Brinton by the publishers.

J. H. SIFERT

A. D. MCPHEE

F. D. HAIGH

GEORGE SCHWEIGERT

J. P. THILL

H. A. JOHNSTON

CHAS. HOWARTH

ED. SIFERT



## Contents

Chapter	Page
1. Wells Brinton's Ambitions.....	5
2. Battles of a Bull-terrier.....	12
3. Shearing the Sheep.....	18
4. The Dreams of a Hawk.....	22
5. Bowen, the Beau.....	26
6. Power and Pelf.....	28
7. The Raiders' Repulse.....	33
8. Sorrows of a Serf.....	35
9. The Golden Fleece.....	37
10. The Bawls of a Bell-Wether.....	40
11. Both Ends Against the Middle.....	44



# Townley & Co.

## I.

### Wells Brinton's Ambitions

*"And the secret that is hid  
Under Cheops pyramid,  
Is that the contractor did  
Cheops out of several millions."*

WHO in North Dakota and Minnesota has not heard of the Nonpartisan League, the new luminary which among bodies political is now glowing with a golden shine? And Arthur C. Townley, the supposed creator and supreme ruler of that on-rushing mass, who flashed out of the darkness not many moons ago, to flame in the political sky of the Northwest and cause the eyes of the nation to turn towards him and view with wonder his meteoric career?

For in the year 1914 the Nonpartisan League did not exist. Art Townley was unknown, save to the Socialists of North Dakota, who knew him as an erratic Socialist organizer, the farmers of Golden Valley County who knew him as an erratic get-rich-quick farmer; and the merchants of Beach who knew him to their sorrow and monetary loss.

No money had he beyond his immediate needs. He was denounced as a dead-beat, derided as a dreamer, and flayed for a fraud. Yet he was not without the admiration and approval of lawyer and land shark. For he had done unto others, and what he did to them was plenty. Howbeit, he had lost all the wealth out of which he had done them and possessed it not. For which sin of omission he commanded no respect.

But before the year 1917 had vanished into the graveyard of the years, the Nonpartisan League had elected a governor, a lower legislature, and a congressman in North Dakota, and was rolling across Minnesota in a mighty resistless tide. The erratic, get-rich-quick farmer had not only got rich, but was a monarch enthroned and entrenched. Controlling a governor and a congressman as he would control oxen in his stable. With legislators supporting, or opposing, legislative measures in blind unquestioning obedience to his commands. With a cloud of followers looking to him for guidance as sailors look to the sun. Ruling a hundred and fifty thousand men over whose political thought and action he held sway as absolute as that of



a caliph upon an oriental throne. And from the multitude who had submitted to his rulership, he had extracted the sum of three million, seven hundred and ninety thousand dollars, according to his own testimony under oath, at the hearing of his bankruptcy proceedings in Bismarck.

Now, the harvesting of \$3,790,000 from the farmers is in itself a financial feat of which our most brilliant frenzied financiers might be justly proud. It throws the money-getting accomplishments of Billy Sunday and Cassie Chadwick far into the shade. And as no complaints to the police or prosecuting attorney are ever noised abroad, it must be that his methods are not only effective and artistic, but pleasing and satisfactory to his loyal mental subjects. Wherefor Townley's achievements have aroused the admiration, not to say envy, of all who strive to bring about the easy divorce of a man from his money.

Sellers of stock in visionary oil wells and mythical mines, vendors of castles in Spain, and other promoters of plans for enriching the public, greet his success with warm expressions of approval. Great gospel sharks, and sensational exhorters who have amassed riches by peddling religious excitement, regard his genius with jealousy green. While plebian wire-tappers, promoters of fake wrestles and races, as well as vulgar bank burglars and train robbers listen to the Arabian tale of Townley's deeds, in gasping amazement, and look up to him with feelings of reverence and awe.

And one and all together, with the way-faring man, they marvel and wonder, asking themselves and others how this thing came to pass, what manner of man Townley may be, and what magic or potent power did he employ. Yet, like many another seeming wonder, when understood, it becomes no wonder at all, but assumes the nature of the simple and easy. And Townley used no spells, charms, or fell hypnotic power. Nor did he by his valor and strength of arm cause the people to cry to him to accept their submission and their shekels. But from a knowledge of poor, stumbling human nature, gained by observing the operations of another bold crusader and financier, he forged a key to the farmers' purse, and a chain with which to bind them to the tail of his golden chariot.

Moreover, and contrary to the prevalent belief, Townley, who is not so much a designer as a builder, did not originate the financial and political ideas upon which the league was founded. He did but build the huge structure after a working model furnished by another who now shares the throne of the king; even as from the puny submarine Holland, invented by an American, the German wrought the giant scourge of the seas. For long before the league was born, its legitimate sire was engaged in redeeming the farmers of Golden Valley County, North Dakota. They believed in him as other farmers now believe in him, and in Townley. And they followed with pathetic and childlike faith wherever he led.

With vigor and valor he battled nobly for their rights. With fire and fury he opposed and denounced their enemies. With kingly command he dictated to them how they should vote. And with energy and enthusiasm he transferred their money to his own coffers in the manner which has gained for Townley his nationwide fame.



From this small model the giant was made, and the shadow of Brinton is over it all. For as Richelieu was to the king of France, and Rasputin, the monk, to the Czar of Russia, so is Wells Brinton, the inventor, to Art Townley, the builder. So let us first consider the inventor and the model that he created, which flourished and grew strong, feeding upon the turmoil it engendered, to fade and die, unwept save by farmers who mourned for money gone glimmering.

If you go west across North Dakota, by the Northern Pacific Railway, leaving the Twin Cities at night, you will come, late in the next afternoon, if not delayed enroute, to the town of Beach, nestling in a valley beyond the Bad Lands. It looks like any little farming town of similar size which, having reached the summit of its upward climb, has hit the downhill trail. It seems drowsy, somewhat dreary, as though mourning for the departed glory of the hey-day of its life.

In this town a few years ago, there might be seen any day, a young man of medium height and build who moved with a quick, nervous step, and alert, active bearing. He owned a mop of black hair, and rather good looking features. There was nothing out of the ordinary in his appearance, nothing to attract more than passing notice, if we except a pair of eyes that were dark and shifty, cunning and furtive. Yet he was destined to cause much commotion and great emotional disturbance in Beach and elsewhere. To fatten and wax rich off the innocence and credulity of the farmers who would give to him of their substance willingly and gladly, and receive from him naught but experience and education in a new and peculiar brand of democracy. For he was James Wells Brinton, editor of the *Golden Valley Chronicle*, and legitimate father of the Nonpartisan League, who saved the farmers of Golden Valley County from great imaginary misfortunes and calamities; who strove mightily and with much success to save them from the misery and distress of having too much money; and who showed to Townley the great possibilities of wealth and power in the farmer saving game.

He came to Beach when the burg was young, in quest of the chances which a new town and country afford. The magnet which attracted him to this spot above others being a friend who ran a saloon, which institution, though unlawful, according to the statute, was by virtue of public sentiment and common consent, both legitimate and fashionable, as well as respectable. And likewise lawful, though somewhat less reputable was poker, a certain American game of chance and alluring charm, which day or night could be found in active operation in the rear of every barroom.

This is illustrative of the way the world does move. For it is not so long ago that the vendor of liquors was a more or less honored citizen in North Dakota. He frequently conducted his saloon on the main street, somewhere in the neighborhood of the court house, and was patronized by city and county officials, including the sheriff, who might or might not have a financial interest in the business. As a rule the saloonist, or blind pigger, was not a high example of righteousness and rectitude, yet often his average was good. In not rare instances he was a leading citizen, interested and active in all matters concerning the welfare and betterment of the town, and has



even been known to sing in the church choir. Usually he was a courageous fighting man.

His customers being largely of the species rough-neck, he had need of courage and strength of arm. For to the end that peaceful patrons might indulge their social and bibulous instincts without annoyance from their rougher brothers, and to avoid complaints and objections to him and his business he must preserve peace and decorum, which often necessitated a liberal use of his fists or stronger arguments. And a wet goods emporium might at any time be transformed into a battlefield with fists thudding upon jaws, boots crashing against ribs, or six-guns flashing and roaring.

He must be made of stern stuff who weathered for long the storms that were always breaking. And his existence was not devoid of excitement or free from the danger of being suddenly and violently ended. A careless bullet might puncture the bubble of life, or a well placed boot or gun barrel solve his earthly problems by speeding him over the hump. But what is that to a game man? The last hurt that life can inflict. Why does a man want to live long? The pain and trouble of living increases with the strength-sapping years, and the great tragedy is the tragedy of age. Why wish to linger out the day that is cheerless at eventide, or tarry when the fire has burned low?

Dimly he knew that obloquy would fall upon him, and the ghosts of his stormy past be conjured up to daunt him in the future when a changed sentiment made his present vocation dishonorable. And little he cared. If alive, he might be far away with his past unknown or forgotten. Anyway, he would have money and could laugh at men's changing views and judgments. And so he played his game, a man's game after all; untroubled by what lay ahead and around a turn of the trail.

Wells had learned the art of printing back in Wells County, where he was born and after which he was named. But his trade did not appeal to his tastes. For he had no longing for labor, although endowed with a great, hungry yearning for money, together with a carelessness of conscience which, when combined with imprudent courage, sometimes leads men to rob trains. But Wells was gifted with intellect; moreover, there dwelt in him nothing of reckless, lawless bravery. And he favored more diplomatic and less dangerous means of snaring the desired dollar without work, which latter method he knew did not always pay.

For he had seen many men who worked hard and long without gain or glory, their pockets being always filled with yawning emptiness. And not to be wondered at was it that he was strongly attracted to poker, or that he decided to become a poker practitioner as a step towards the greater heights of finance. His life work was crowding hard upon him, and already the financial condition of the farmer was becoming to him a matter of interest and concern. By close application he had mastered much of the intricacies of the poker game, and was impatient to turn his knowledge to good and profitable account. What better use could be made of his wisdom and skill than saving the farmers and all others from the worries that are said to attend the possession of cash and collateral? So, making known his



ambition to his friend, he was duly installed as gamekeeper in the back room.

Not but that he could have done worse. For playing or running the poker game is not so dark of hue as painted by the preachers. It is played by the good and the bad in the high places and the low, in the legislative mansion and the den in the alley. It goes with the pioneer into the wilderness, and it follows the flag across the seas. A fascinating game, abounding in thrills and chills. And many a great and good man has yielded to its lure.

Entering upon his new duties, Wells ran the game, and when poker business was slack he tended bar and dabbled in real estate. The money came, and was expended after the manner of the prodigal and spendthrift unburdened by care or moral scruple. But he soon found that his position, though lucrative, was not without objectionable features. Intoxicated players, with befuddled ideas of honesty and justice would become unruly and belligerent. The tin-horn gambler roved the land and descended upon the poker game. His activities must be detected and suppressed with stern hand. And not a few of those wandering knights of the card table were muscular and self-assertive, with a courage strengthened and stimulated by whiskey and cocaine which spelled danger for the gamekeeper.

There was fight in Wells Brinton, few men possessed more, and it was of the impulsive, unreasoning and merciless kind. Likewise he possessed speed and some fistic skill. But mingled with the turbulent red blood that impelled him to fight was a yellow cross-current which was his weakness. The only pleasing ingredient of his job was the money. And even that did not come as fast as he flung it to the winds. For the ease with which easy and ill-gotten gains melt away was always proverbial, and has been fittingly sung by poet in the forceful phrase of the underworld, to-wit:

“Suppose you screeve? or go cheap-jack?  
Or fake the broads? or fig a nag?  
Or thimble-rig? or knap a yack?  
Or pitch a snide? or smash a rag?  
Suppose you duff? or nose and lag?  
Or get the straight, and land your pot?  
How do you melt the multy swag?  
Booze and the blowens cop the lot.

“Fiddle or fence, or mace, or mack;  
Or moskeneer, or flash the drag;  
Dead-lurk a crib, or do a crack;  
Pad with a slang, or chuck a fag;  
Bonnet, or tout, or mump and gag;  
Battle the tats, or mark the spot;  
You cannot bank a single stag,  
Booze, and the blowens cop the lot.”

Thus it was with the money that came to Wells. Also, he began to realize that an odor of the disreputable hung over his vocation which might cling to him and retard his advancement. For the gambler is looked down on by Methodists and other prejudiced



persons. So he cast about for a more agreeable and respectable means of gain. The business of banking caught and held his attention as having in it possibility of all that he desired, as well as being easy to establish. For the banking laws of North Dakota were liberal to him who would become a banker. A man might start a bank without possessing any material wealth. After which he might prosper exceedingly, become a leading citizen, and own a front pew in the church from which he had formerly been obliged to go out backwards, owing to the dilapidated state of his unmentionables.

A note for \$10,000, signed by some one of more or less irresponsibility would serve as the necessary collateral. A bank charter cost but \$33. A safe could be obtained on credit. And a building large enough to hold the safe and the banker could be rented, or built without great outlay of cash.

In Brinton's former home town of Fessenden lived a banker of great wealth. In the early days of the county he had established a bank. And according to the testimony of men who spoke without prejudice, his capital had consisted of six-bits and a bottle of whiskey. He was now rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and among financial stars of the state he shone resplendent.

With this worthy example inspiring him, Wells formed an alliance with Hans Jensen, an individual famed for a shortage of cash and a great disregard for Christian precepts, and Pagan ethics in regard to doing unto others. And together they founded the Farmers and Merchants Bank, while the startled farmers and merchants gaped and gasped with astonishment.

And yet there were persons gifted with unusual recklessness or ignorance who intrusted small sums of money to the care of the rising young banker. For ever is the sucker born and matured. When fortune thus favored him, the frolicsome financier betook himself to the neighboring cow-town of Wibaux, where saloons and other attractions called to him with irresistible lure. And there he squandered money in riotous revels, trusting to the luck that never failed him against the day of reckoning.

One night while Wells disported himself in Wibaux, the cashier examined the books and discovered that \$500 had been deposited in the bank by the unwary populace. He then searched the safe with great care, but only \$50 could he find, which proved that he was being treated with gross unfairness by his superior officer. So he placed the silver in a sack and sallied forth to the saloon to vindicate his rights and maintain his dignity as a cashier. He was later found reposing peacefully in the back yard with \$40 still in his possession, which was returned to the bank, to the great disgust of the cashier.

Thus thrived and grew thin the Farmers and Merchants Bank until in the safe where there should be \$500 there was naught but utter vacancy and empty space. But it seemed the decree of fate that Wells would always have the assistance of friends in time of need. Not that he deserved it. For he was a steadfast believer in the theory that it is more blessed to receive than to give, and he often repaid friendship with woe. Friends so rewarded turned from him and reviled him. Sometimes they smote, or attempted to smite him with their fists. But this form of criticism proved unsatisfactory. His speed



and knowledge of the manly art made him hard to hit, and he promptly brought suit for damages against the would-be critic. Also, it lacked all the qualities of a safe proposition for any but men of exceptional ability. Wells could fight, though he had not the fighting heart, and his disposition promised dire disaster to the man whom he defeated in battle. Which things being known caused disapproval to be expressed in words rather than deeds.

Yet, always would some one aid him when his need was sore. Before the absence of the cash was discovered, friends restored the vanished bank deposits. And Wells was saved to society to rescue the downtrodden farmer from the oppressor.

But it became apparent to the brave banker that even so respectable and remunerative a vocation as banking was not without its drawbacks and disadvantages. There were certain laws and statutes regulating the business, meddlesome and unreasonable laws, based upon the obnoxious and pernicious theory that money deposited in banks belongs to the depositors and not to the bankers. Dangerous laws, which provided that bankers who invested the depositors' money in allegorical assets and figurative houses and lots should undergo a compulsory residence in a mansion behind a high wall. And the bank examiner was abroad in the land, prowling wolflike athirst for blood.

It dawned upon Wells that a project governed by laws, which compelled the projector to return all money given him, to the owners on demand, was not in any way adapted to his talents and ambitions. Wherefore he foreswore banking, determined in the future to engage only in operations which would be hampered by no such unfair and trivial restrictions, handicapped by no such nonsensical regulations.

The bank was sold and still exists. And Wells now denounces banks as monsters spreading deadly tentacles over the farms and sucking the blood of the farmer. But never does he speak of his experience as a banker or the foundation of shifting sand upon which his bank was built.



## II.

### Battles of a Bull Terrier

A GAIN was Wells looking for an opportunity to use his talents to his economic advantage, and again did fortune favor him. The plutocrat who bought the bank had grown rich raising sheep and cattle, and was deserving of somewhat more respect than the common rich. For insinuations had been made which tended to cast discredit upon the manner in which he obtained his first sheep, which insinuations were without foundation, and based entirely upon a doubt as to whether he had money enough to buy a sheep. But now his great flocks and herds roamed the Bad Lands and prairies, and were extensively used for food by honest but hungry homesteaders without asking the permission of the owner, this being deemed an unnecessary formality. Some of the more enterprising of the homesteaders sold his beef to the meat market in Beach, which business, though profitable, was regarded with disfavor by the owner and forbidden by that oppressor of the poor. And one wholesale dealer in stolen beef, who refused to surrender what he believed to be his inalienable rights, was placed in the penitentiary. This was objected to and protested against by some who denounced it as an outrage and an example of the way the rich trample upon the poor. But the cattleman's action in retiring the beef dealer from circulation was sustained by the majority of honest farmers, who held to the belief that selling the beef to the butcher was ethically improper, as well as a violation of etiquette.

The cattleman being human had ambitions. For not by cattle and sheep alone does man contentedly live. Ever he becomes dissatisfied, and his discontent gives birth to new desires and spurs him to new efforts. Dissatisfied with walking, he rode the horse. Dissatisfied with the horse, he devised the swift machine. Tiring of the earth, he flies aloft to soar among the clouds, and turns longing eyes to the stars. And always discontent drives him, and the lure of the undone and the unknown beckons him onward. Wherefore the thing called human progress.

Having cattle, sheep, and money, the cow-man now wanted political honor which, more than wealth, distinguishes a man from the common herd. Being shrewd and wise in the way of the world, he knew the power of the press in politics, also he had taken notice of the intelligence and the enterprising character of Wells, and the fact that he was a practical printer. The result being that Wells next blossomed forth as editor and publisher of the *Golden Valley Chronicle*. And the wisdom of the cow-man was proven at the next election, when he was elected to the state senate, where he performed with honor and distinction.



Wells realized that as editor of the newspaper he held in his hands a powerful weapon with which to further his ambitions and flail his foes. And he determined to make the best use of its merits along these lines. As a moulder of public opinion and sentiment upon which the political job depends, he believed he would be able to exert a strong influence over those who were in office, and wished to stay there, as well as those who were out of office and wanted to get in, which would operate greatly to his financial wellbeing. But a number of office holders objected to this plan. They were disposed to regard him as a rank outsider and interloper, and to ignore him and his newspaper. Albeit, his importance in the political scheme of things was recognized by the men higher up and he was appointed postmaster.

Failing to influence the politicians to his own benefit, Wells attacked them with great vigor in the columns of the *Chronicle*. And the office holders and their supporters banded themselves together for offense and defence. The leadership was assumed by an attorney, Gallagher by name, who possessed some ability as a lawyer, and great lack of merit as a politician, together with a character and disposition which made him few friends and many enemies, and promised to get him nowhere in politics or finance. True to his nativity, Gallagher was gifted with wit and a strong desire to rule. Does not the old song say that "the men that are made for bosses are the sons of Erin's Isle." Likewise, it is sometimes a weakness of the Irishman to fancy himself to be descended from the ancient kings of Ireland, and, therefore, qualified to rule the plebian herd. And Brian Boru, the warrior king who vanquished the invading Danes, is a favorite ancestor with many an Irishman who is really descended from Brian, the tinker. Albeit, the Irish have been famed through brawling, blood-soaked centuries for their courage and fighting qualities, and sympathy for the under dog in the fight. And they are always found wherever bayonets gleam and cannons roar—or glasses clink and tinkle. But Gallagher was one of the exceptions to every rule, and his leadership of the opposing forces worked greatly to the advantage of Brinton.

Wells continued to fire salvos and broadsides at the politicians, who soon realized that a newspaper can be properly opposed only by another newspaper. So *The Beach Advance* was brought into being by the Gallagher cohorts, and a furious newspaper war was soon in full blast. Wells quickly proved his superiority as a newspaper fighter. He soon had his opponents bleeding and gory on the field of combat, while the venomous darts hurled at him failed to penetrate his tough hide, and only stimulated his warlike fervor. The warriors of the Gallagher clan who could wield a pen, rushed to the assistance of their sadly battered editor. But Wells bowled them over, put them to flight and continued to bombard them after they had fled from the field.

The controversy was still young, when a pugnacious member of the Gallagher gang, with a record as a rough-and-tumble fighter, became smitten with what to him was a pleasing and beautiful thought. He would assault, batter, and beat up the rampant reformer, and thus prove to the world that Wells was a liar, an atrocious falsifier and a teller of gross untruths. He himself, alone and unaided, would refute the editor's lies and slanders by pounding him with his fists full sore.



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Nor was he unmindful of the credit which his proving of Brinton's falsity and rascality would reflect upon himself.

This simple way of deciding questions of right and wrong, however, is regarded with grave doubt, and criticised by wise ones who argue that a fistic fight only proves who is the better fighter, even as a debate but proves who is the better debater. But the rough person was not afflicted with disturbing wisdom. So, meeting the editor on the street, he requested, nay demanded, that a pugilistic contest then and there take place. To this urgent appeal Wells signified his assent by landing a straight right on his foeman's mouth and drawing first blood.

In the joint debate that followed, the rough clansman used his teeth as a convincing argument, while Wells displayed a distaste amounting to a dislike for blows and bruises and a talent for avoiding them. Otherwise, no points or matters of importance to the public were brought to light or proven. And the discussion was declared a draw by one who had taken upon himself the onerous duties of referee. But that fight and the consequence thereof are still talked about in the valley. For while it caused no great bodily harm to the fighters, it hurt the pocketbooks of the taxpaying farmers, thereby bringing pain to their hearts and causing a debate of no great merit to live green in their memory.

The fray was over, the excitement had subsided, but Wells was not calmed or appeased. Instead, he was deeply stirred. The fighting animal in him was strong, and often restrained only by that malignant weakness of courage which, though it shamed him, may have been designed by nature, which aims at equilibrium, to be a brake upon the fiery forces of that aggressive brain. But now red rage possessed his soul, dominating his weakness and clouding his judgment. Moved by anger that recked or reasoned not, he procured a black-jack. Girding up his loins, he set forth upon the trail of the rough one. And hunting down his enemy he larruped him with a right good will and a great lack of humane considerations. Which performance on his part may be safely classed as an error from any point of view, legal, ethical, or otherwise.

For whaling the daylights out of a man, with a black-jack, to say nothing of its moral aspects, is legally classified as an assault with a dangerous weapon, and declared to be not only unlawful but felonious. Wherefore Brinton's opponents laughed in glee and joy reigned in their hearts.

Wells was promptly arrested. Also, he was sued for damages. But in the trial, by a jury of his peers, the law was brought up against that stumbling block in its path and thorn in its side—human nature. Which said human nature is apt to decree that a big fighting man who attacks or forces a fight upon a smaller man of no pugilistic pretensions, and is worsted in the argument, is entitled to no revenge or redress in court, even though a black-jack play a part in his discomfiture. So it was in the case of the State of North Dakota versus J. W. Brinton, and Wells was acquitted, despite the strenuous efforts of the redoubtable Colonel Hildreth, who officiated as Prosecuting Attorney. The damage suit also failed of its object, and worse, the costs were taxed against the plaintiff.



Great is human sympathy and appearances are potent for good or ill. The harm that abode in Wells appeared not upon the surface, save to the close observer. He looked mild and gentle, in sharp contrast to the rough artist whose warlike character could be detected by a glance of his unclassic features.

Exonerated, victorious, and triumphant, Wells returned to the attack. For he possessed the spirit of the bull-terrier, lacking only that animal's dogged indifference to pain or bodily harm. His foes, who had been engulfed in defeat, when expecting complete victory, were too badly whipped and broken of spirit for any determined opposition.

He appealed to the justice and righteousness of the farmers, stoutly asserting that it was for them that he battled and labored, and reminding them often of the harvest of woe that his defense of them had brought him. Long and earnestly did he dwell upon the great cost of his trial, which they must pay, and here he struck a responsive chord in their honest withers.

He declared that the opposing clan was guilty of sundry and divers high crimes and misdemeanors, including malfeasance, misfeasance, and non-feasance. He accused the wicked politicians of looting the county treasury and increasing the taxes that there might be more to steal. He charged them with embezzlement, robbery, incitement to murder, stealing the court house furniture, hypocrisy, and unlawful co-habitation, as well as numerous and various other violations of law, custom, etiquette, decency, and deportment, and all the principles and ethics, proprieties and amenities, real or pretended of polite society.

Not that Wells felt any obligation to be accurate in his published assertions. The truthfulness of his statements was always a secondary consideration and of no importance. His object was not to make and maintain a reputation for truth, but to arouse the ire of farmers and direct their anger and opposition against his opponents in a way that would shed bright glory upon himself, as a hero, who stood out boldly and fearlessly against evil-doers and wicked ones who would rob and oppress the downtrodden farmer.

To all of his literary lashings his defeated foes offered no defense. They wrapped themselves in a mantle of silence and scorned to reply to his attacks or deny his accusations. And the doubts of the farmers rapidly gave way to conviction.

Few fully realize the power of the printed newspaper page. It stamps an impression upon the mind of the reader which, though it be false, may, if often repeated, influence and deflect the judgment of a thinker. While to non-thinkers it is invaluable. For it saves the trouble of thinking, which might cause a headache, and with its assistance a firm belief may be built up without the labor of reasoning.

Suppose you are a law-abiding and respectable member of society, with a reputation for righteousness, and a record upon which no stains of sin appear. Let a newspaper open an attack upon you and accuse you, even by veiled insinuations, of being a horse thief. Let this continue for a long period and you would find yourself in *ba drepute*. And those who knew that you had stolen no horses would suspect that you had stolen sheep, or would do so if you had the opportunity.



To be sure an action for libel might be brought, which the editor could prevent by publishing a retraction. Such an action was brought against Wells. He published a retraction. Then he published a retraction of that retraction and continued to bombard the enemy. His never-ending attacks steadily wore away the unbelief of the farmers, until the time came when those who had once laughed at his outbursts, accepted all of his statements as true.

But to completely convince the farmers that they were menaced by a gang of black villains, something of a serious and exciting nature was needed. Something which would arouse indignation and pity, and it was soon forthcoming. The town was awakened by the clang of the fire bells and the wail of the siren whistle one dark night, to find that the *Chronicle* building was burning. When the fire was first discovered, the basement was a roaring, raging furnace of flame, which appeared to be generated by a large quantity of gasoline. The progress of the fire was swift and furious. A great pillar of flame was soon shooting skyward. The brick walls collapsed and the wreck was complete.

Next day a startling story was being told. Four of Brinton's enemies, two of them being the city policemen, the others the state's attorney and a state representative, and all armed to the teeth and prepared to do murder had descended upon the *Chronicle* building in the darkness of the night, and while the policemen stood guard with gun in hand, the others had applied the torch. The cowardly foe had fought him with fire, and his defense of the farmers against the villains who ruled and robbed them had brought him black ruin. He was now homeless and penniless. All that he had was buried in the wreck of his building. The fiends whom he had so bravely fought had downed him at last.

The story quickly spread throughout the county and aroused a white hot indignation. The farmers were furious, many of them being aroused to a pitch of excitement approaching the danger point, and militant sympathy and offers of financial assistance poured in upon Wells. But the business men who had always regarded Brinton's war against the politicians, and his protestations of love for the farmers with much amusement, did not in anywise share the farmers' sentiment and feeling.

They knew that the destroyed building was encumbered by mortgages and liens to the amount of \$10,000.00, which was more than the property would bring at a sale, and that foreclosure proceedings had already commenced. They were also aware that the building was insured for \$13,000.00, and therefore the fire caused Wells no loss, besides arousing the farmers and causing them to believe him a martyr to their cause. Nor could the politicians be expected to help Wells out of his financial troubles by burning his building. But the farmers did not know this, nor did they want to know. All their doubts had changed to belief, and they regarded anything said to Brinton's discredit as part of a plot against themselves. Thus the farmers raged, while the business men laughed. And so the wonder grew, who set the fire?

The *Chronicle* was quickly re-established in new quarters, and Wells was again searing and scorching his enemies with a vitriolic pen.



Not to convince the farmers of their infamy, for they were already convinced, but merely to add fuel to the flames of their wrath, he now held the foe up to scorn, as fire fiends and would-be murderers. Their legal persecutions having failed, they had attempted to destroy his life as well as his property, to the end that they might not be hindered or hampered in their robbery and enslavement of the farmers. Turning his guns upon the business men, he declared that they regarded the farmers as slaves to be driven and robbed. This extract from one of his editorial fulminations being a fair specimen:

"The merchants want to get the farmers out of public and business life. To keep the farmers out of politics and at work like slaves and servants, simply to dig money out of the ground to feed them and their political grafters."

This line of argument, though it caused the business men and wise farmers to laugh, made conditions clear to the farmers who followed Wells. The principles for which Washington fought and Lincoln gave up his life were about to be overthrown, and the infamous institution of slavery established in Golden Valley County. The liberty for which our ancestors died was to be ruthlessly destroyed, and the farmers bound with fetters of slavery and servitude.

Outrageous! Fiendish! and Damnable! they loudly declared. Shades of Patrick Henry! It must not be! Never should the farmers bow beneath the yoke of slavery! And gnashing their teeth with rage, they vowed and swore before high heaven that they would not be enslaved by the slavers of Beach. They would place themselves under the command of the brave Wells Brinton, and fight for freedom, glorious freedom, or a gory bed and a hero's grave.



### III.

## Shearing the Sheep

*"The insect sees the tiny mite  
And eats it as its natural right  
The chicken sees the insect fair  
And dines upon it then and there  
Man eats the chicken if he can  
And such is Nature's wondrous plan."*

THE time had now come for Wells to reap the fruits of the seed he had laboriously sown, for the suckers were ripe for the harvest. This he proceeded to do by issuing stock in *The Chronicle* and offering it for sale to the farmers, assuring them that the money would be used in defending them from the foe. They bought it greedily, as the fish strikes at the shining bait. The value of the stock did not interest them. How the business was conducted, and what was done with the money mattered not. They had enlisted in a righteous and glorious cause and were willing to give not only their money, but their lives if need be, in defense of their liberty.

So Wells sold stock to the aroused tillers of the soil. Also he persuaded them to sign notes which were payable to himself. According to the testimony of a farmer who afterwards sued Wells in an attempt to get his money back, the notes were to be held by Wells as an emergency war fund, and returned to the farmers if not needed in their defense. He promptly sold the notes to the bank.

The money now flowed to Wells in a continuous stream. His power throughout the county was great, but he wanted more power in the city, so he ran for the office of mayor of Beach, and was elected by two majority, though a number of his supporters were arrested for illegal voting.

Wells now possessed the power he had craved. But power wielded without wisdom makes for its own destruction, and his triumph was the beginning of his downfall, and the end of his money-getting career in the Golden Valley.

As we struggle along, buffeted by life's storms, there comes to us a little of wisdom. We learn that whatever our merits may be, others possess them in equal or greater measure. The work that we do may be done by another, and, mayhap, done better. Also, that the worm will turn, that sleeping dogs should be let lie, and a beaten foe should not be goaded further.

Two gladiators of the ring, Kid McCoy and Jack McCormack once faced each other in battle array. McCoy's pugilistic assets were brains, speed, cruelty, and a wicked wallop, in all of which merits, excepting the wallop, McCormack was somewhat lacking and deficient. No sooner did McCoy get the range than whirlwinds of



blows smote upon the luckless McCormack. McCoy disappeared from McCormack's view in a mist out of which gloved fists still rained upon him, and he sank to the floor.

Nor did he intend to arise before the count of ten. What was the use. He had no chance against that leering fiend, who seemed to be assisted by a legion of evil spirits.

"Get up and fight, you—— big cur," snarled McCoy.

Up rose McCormack, as though propelled by powerful springs. His right crashed against the sneering face, and deep sleep descended upon Kid McCoy.

Again the ring and Kid McCoy. Against him Peter Maher, who carried in his right a trip to slumberland. Again a shower of McCoy fists and Peter upon the floor.

Then sweetly spake McCoy, in a soft, seductive voice: "Stay down, Peter. Don't be a fool. You'll only get your head knocked off if you get up." Peter stayed down.

A prerogative of mayorship is the appointment of police. And Wells selected his policemen with a view to their ability for offense and defense, and the terror they could inspire in the hearts of all who opposed him. To the position of chief, he appointed Seaman Smith, a blacksmith by profession, who weighed 320 pounds, with a strength and speed suggestive of the grizzly bear, and who was not without his good points. Bill Neavles, a pugilistic gunman and train robber, who had distinguished himself by whipping five men in a day upon the streets of Beach, was also appointed policeman; and another expugilist of lesser light completed the force.

Thus equipped, Wells felt prepared to exercise his authority in a proper and becoming manner, and having his opponents down, he proceeded to walk over them, regardless of the rules of pugilism and war.

Did an opponent offend the mayor he was seized upon by the good-natured chief, who eased him up the street and cast him into the calaboose, after the manner of a mogul locomotive persuading an empty flat car. What else could he do? Would you have him lose his job? And strapping two-fisted Bill Neavles trod the streets with lowering brow and menacing eye, eager to prove his ability and devotion to the mayor.

The reign of terror thus instituted caused the worms to turn, and new forces were aroused to activity. A new editor took charge of the *Beach Advance*. He declared war against Wells to a finish, and a bitter newspaper battle followed. When the fight was ended by the intervention of the federal authorities, a change had come over the scene. The police force was dispersed. The giant had resigned. Bill Neavles had gone back to robbing trains. The ex-pug had disappeared, and *The Chronicle* stock was no longer salable. For Wells had been exposed as being guilty of all the sins with which he charged his opponents.

But, though the doubts which had been aroused in the minds of the farmers prevented their buying more stock, many of them still gave Wells their moral support and refused to believe the charges and exposures of the *Beach Advance*. To do so would be a sad reflection upon their own intelligence, an admission that they had been fooled,



and man loves not to be fooled. Call him a scoundrel if you must, but never a fool. And when the thought that he has played the fool to the benefit of a wiser man obtrudes itself upon his mind, he rejects it as he rejects the suspicion that a deadly disease has fastened upon him, or the first discovery that he is no longer young. And he refuses to believe it until familiarity with the fact dulls the fear and dread which it first inspired. Thus, though prudence forbade them to buy more stock, they refused to believe that their idol was of clay and themselves but fools who worshipped false gods.

During these stressful times, in the fall of 1914, Art Townley frequently came to Beach in the interest of the Socialist party, and his own candidacy for the office of state representative. A close friendship existed between Art and Wells, and Art had watched his friend battle for the farmers' rights and sell them stock, with great interest. He observed how the farmers, having given Wells their money, refused to believe that they were being fooled and hoodwinked, in the face of positive evidence. And seeing all these things, he pondered deeply.

The farmers of Golden Valley County were about equal in intelligence to the farmers of any other county. Why could not such a plan of salvation and rescue, improved, perfected, and changed to suit the existing conditions, be worked throughout the state. Art and Wells could be often seen in close, earnest consultation. And in the winter the redoubtable Arthur organized the Nonpartisan League.

Wells' interest in the newspaper business now waned apace. There was no more money in that field. The harvest was over. And his fertile brain was working upon a plan for promoting the welfare and prosperity of certain farmers who had not yet lost faith in him. Which plan he proceeded to put into operation by organizing a farmers' co-operative store, with himself in full control. A few farmers who still believed in him subscribed for stock to the amount of \$14,000.00.

Farmers who cared not to buy stock were induced to sign notes which were to be used to influence other farmers and returned when the business was established. The notes were sold to the banks by Wells, and when the bankers demanded payment, they received such letters as this from the simple signers:

"January 10, 1918.

"Mr. A. J. Martin,  
"Sentinel Butte, N. D.  
"Dear Sir:—

"Your letter at hand and will say kindly collect the note you mention from J. W. Brinton. He told me when I gave him the note at my farm near Burkey that he just wanted to use my name a couple of months until he got the business started, and then he would return the note to me. I called to see him about it and he said he had mislaid it, and several other times he was out. I have witnesses to this. There never was at any time any value received on my part. I have explained this a couple of times to Mr. Hudson.

"Very respectfully,  
"WM. A. MOYER."



And to assist and benefit the stockholders to the utmost, the store was organized in such a way that the farmers were relieved of all responsibility in the management and receipts of the business. There was nothing to trouble them in connection with the venture except the payment of bills and indebtedness. A building was erected and stocked, and business commenced.

Wells resigned as editor of *The Chronicle*, which left the paper on the hands of the farmers who bought the newspaper stock. The farmers took inventory of their newspaper belongings and found that they consisted of only a list of subscribers, most of whom had paid Wells for their subscription far in advance, many of them having paid for five years. The *Beach Advance* owners offered \$1,000.00 for the subscription list and good will, which offer was quickly accepted; and so ended the *Golden Valley Chronicle*.

How much money Wells received from the sale of *Chronicle* stock and the notes signed by his brilliant believers, is hard to estimate correctly. For some of them now refuse to admit that they bought stock or signed notes, and others care not to discuss the matter, it is a tender subject. But all estimates place it well up in the thousands, most of them being in the twenty or thirty thousand neighborhood.

The Nonpartisan League was now in working order, so Wells severed his connection with the store. And it became known that he had sold the goods and paid not the bills, for which the stockholders were about \$5,000 to the bad. Also, and unknown to the stockholders, he had mortgaged the store property for \$3,000 and put the money deep down in his jeans, for which their hearts were full sad. And one day he was missing from his haunts and the scenes of his sheep shearing knew him no more. He had gone to join Art Townley, where the pastures were larger and richer.

end





TOWNLEY BROS. DRILLING NEAR BEACH. PHOTO BY WELCH  
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The land was broken up, the flax was sown.



#### IV.

### The Dreams of a Hawk

THERE is not much in general appearances, and the looks of Arthur Townley are neither imposing or impressive. His physical make-up is rather tall, slim, and ordinary, yet there is something unusual about him. That something which cannot be explained or described, that makes a man different from other men. His eyes are dreamy, and in them is a fearless and speculative gleam. Nor do the eyes belie the man, for he is a dreamer, and his courage has been proven in fist to fist battle against odds of three to one. His nose is arched, and the whole contour of his face is somewhat suggestive of the hawk, even as Brinton's face mildly suggests the bull-terrier. There may not be much in a curved nose, though physiognomists say that there is aggression and rapacity. And the hook-nosed men of history were rapacious warriors and plunderers. Towards this belief, the great Napoleon strongly inclined. The faces of his marshals were beaky. The marshals were fierce and predatory as eagles.

And Townley's record shows, nay proves, that he was always predatory, but so was Brinton. Alike hunters of prey, they differed in merit and magnitude. For Townley possessed in greater measure qualities which make for superiority—ambition and imagination. No less predatory than Townley, was Brinton, but lacking the larger imagination, his hunting ground was bounded by the horizon of his haunts, while the fancy of Townley soared hawk-like, aloft and afar. Brinton was content to hunt, bring down and fleece his prey within the confines of a county. But the ambition of the hawk-visaged Townley knew no border or boundary, for he was a free-booter of the sky.

Like Brinton, he came to Beach in pursuit of the rainbows that beckon and elude. A man had made a large fortune in a single crop of flax. It was heralded far and wide, and he became known as the flax king of the Golden Valley.

This fired Townley's imagination and blazed for him the way. What the flax king had done, he would do, but on a larger scale. He interested a man with money, who would pay for the seed and labor. A contract for a deed was secured which gave him possession of a tract of land in Squaw Gap. From the machine companies, upon his promises and prospects, he obtained great tractor engines, gang plows, and other needed machinery. But Townley dreamed through the balmy days of spring, and the planting was delayed.

The land was broken up, the flax was sown at last, and grew through the drowsy summer. The tang of autumn came into the air, and Townley could look upon a waving sea of blue blossoms and think upon the yield. A moderate yield and price would give him a



profit of \$100,000. Always he had craved for this with bitter longing, and now it was soon to be realized.

Came a day when the high temperature which had prevailed, towards evening suddenly dropped. The clouds broke away, the wind died down, and the mercury fell lower and lower as the night wore on. A great cold stillness, unbroken by breath of wind, hung over the valley. The stars paled and faded out of the chill sky, dawn came. The orb of day stared redly across the tops of the hills, and the face of nature was covered with killing frost that glistened white and deadly. The flax was a stark, lifeless mass that shriveled in the sun. A dead sea in which hopes were wrecked and drowned, and Townley was broke. The rainbow had flamed and faded.

The man who paid for the seed and labor laughed. As the game man laughs when stricken sore, he would hide his hurt from the world. Townley smiled, for he, too, was game as a wounded hawk. A look of pain crept into the fearless eyes, but they still dreamed on. His golden vision had been rudely shattered, but he was dreaming again.

The agent of the machine companies came to take away the mortgaged machinery. And his experience, as related by himself, showed that Townley's money-getting faculties and methods had not been impaired or changed by his loss.

Two of the engines could not be found, but Townley offered to find them for \$50. The money being paid, he led the agent to an engine which had been hidden in a draw. The agent asked for the other engine. "It will cost you a hundred dollars to find that one," said Townley. And it did.

The tale of the farming failure, and Townley owing more than a quarter of a million dollars, has been shouted along the far-flung battle line of his opponents. And not to be outdone by his enemies, Townley has told it from many a platform. "They gambled with me," says Townley. "I lost and they lost, too." But Townley does not mention Frank Heath and Henry Sanders who ran little grocery stores, struggling to keep their heads above water. They trusted him for many hundreds of dollars worth of groceries and did not know that they were playing a game of chance with a crooked gambler who had visions of empire in his brain. For one bill of more than \$700 Townley gave Sanders a check upon a bank in which he had no money. But not even a fraudulent check did he give Frank Heath. Both men have sunk under the waves of adversity. Frank Heath is working as janitor, for \$50 a month. And Henry Sanders, poorer and sadder, has gone back to the homestead. They trusted too many Townleys.

It has been said in Townley's defense that he only despoiled the rich. But let it be said to his full discredit that he also plundered the poor. Rich and poor looked alike to Townley. All was fish that came to his net. And Heath and Sanders were only two of many poor men who suffered at his hands.

Try to see any good in Townley. Excuse his debts to the rich. And up rises the spectre of what he has done to the poor. Into the light comes a vision of Frank Heath, little, old and gray of hair, toiling for \$50 a month, and Townley's Golconda of millions. And upon the screen of the mind appears a picture of the hawk who lives by rapine.



The Socialist party was growing rapidly in North Dakota and attracting the attention of politicians and office-seekers, whose great merits were not recognized by the other parties. The movement was made up largely of farmers and workingmen of no great intelligence. There was a demand and a place for intelligent leaders, and, as being a leader is often profitable, Townley became deeply interested in Socialism.

A man does not become a Socialist because of a vicious current in his blood, but for the same reasons that he becomes anything else, for the benefits which he hopes to derive here or hereafter. The leaders hope to benefit by the salaries and incidentals of office. The followers expect to be benefitted by something. Why? Because

Like those of other political faith, the Socialist follows a leader. And when the leader has a large following, he and his followers are worth something to somebody. The leader suddenly favors something which he had formerly opposed, and the follower follows. Or there may slowly filter into his well protected brain the thought that his leader is just as he represented other leaders to be. And he may quit the Socialists in disgust and become a Bull Moose, or, maybe, a Holy Roller.

The thought underlying Socialism is this: Labor produces all wealth. To the laborer belongs all that he produces. This theory is opposed and objected to, not only by capitalists large and small, but many others who have ability, ambitions, and aspirations, though many are willing to preach the doctrine for what money there is in it and use Socialism as a stepping stone to Capitalism.

Socialism appeals strongly to the down and out, whose earthly prospects lack brilliance; and it is accepted by the hopeless, helpless crowd, who cannot climb. But let luck or accident raise the rebellious Socialist to the crest of the wave, and Socialism becomes to him ridiculous and pernicious, the rare exception only proving the rule.

John L. Koeppler was a Socialist lawyer of Beach, and a candidate for the office of attorney general. He lacked lucre and siller, but possessed a mind that explored heights and depths and pondered much upon the riddles of life. Learned was he in radical lore, and deeply versed in Socialism. Frowning fortune suddenly smiled briefly upon John, and he became possessed of a few thousand dollars. Soon after, he met a friend who greeted him with the query: "John, are you still a Socialist?" "No, Jim," he replied, with a whimsical smile, "Socialism was a great truth once, but it isn't now."

Art Townley became a Socialist speaker, also a candidate for the office of state representative with A. E. Bowen. And it was confidently whispered among the Socialists who knew them well, that if they were elected, big business would have to come across with the money good and strong to keep them quiet.



## Bowen, the Beau

**B**OWEN was a Socialist orator of long standing. From his callow youth, when he taught school for a time, he had never been known to work, and was famed for his ability to discharge vast quantities of airy oratory. He was also distinguished by a peculiar manner of gazing upon the world, and by his great love for the fair sex.

Socialists of Beach did not love Bowen, and as proof of their unfavorable opinion, some cited the fact that "he couldn't even look straight." That their opinion of his honesty had foundation in fact, was proven later when Bowen was chief clerk of the House of Representatives of North Dakota. A bill relating to the taxing of freight lines was introduced, which naturally was not desired by the aforesaid freight lines. Townley & Co. did not openly oppose this bill, and it passed both houses. But Bowen effectively killed the bill by the simple method of reporting to the Senate that the bill had been killed by the House. The Senate discovered when too late, how neatly the legislature had been outwitted by Bowen. And the solons thus expressed their indignation in a resolution of censure:

"Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Senate, that A. E. Bowen is hereby censured for his action in defeating senate bill No. 225 by making a false report to the senate."

But the work had been done. To say or insinuate that the reward had not been collected, would be to cast unjust aspersions upon Townley and Bowen, who were always good collectors. And the resolution of censure only caused Bowen to laugh.

Other Socialists based their objections to Bowen upon moral grounds. For man likes to criticise, beat up, or otherwise chastise another man in behalf of morality. Among these latter was John L. Koeppler, who was outspoken in his disapproval of Bowen's immoral ambitions, and declared that "Wherever he goes he leaves a trail of slime."

Deeply imbedded in the heart of womankind is a love for a fighting man. An emotion grounded in her bitter need through countless generations, when the safety and welfare of the female and her cubs rested in the fighting power of her savage mate, the strength and speed of his heavy hewed limbs, and the weight of his club of stone. Sown and nurtured in the caves and jungles of a world that was red of tooth and claw and filled with fear, it has lived through the ages, and still does it bloom and blossom bright as ever.

So strong does this instinct or race memory survive in woman that her admiration may go forth to the man who, like Bowen, fights only with jaw bones, and hurls not javelins, but great gusts and gales of tainted atmosphere at robbers in the abstract, goblins in the air, and all dim and distant foes, real and unreal.



Fighting men are sometimes embarrassed by the attention of languishing loveliness, and have been known to conduct or attempt a disorderly retreat when arrayed against feminine adoration. But Bowen was afflicted with no false modesty. True, Bowen was married, but he was not the man to let a mere technicality stand between him and what he believed to be his duty.

The sport of hunting women is not without peril to the hunter. For many a human male is as fiercely defensive of a female as was his ancestor in the caves and trees, who tore the invader's throat with his great fangs. But if the element of danger has no charms for the gay Lothario, it may be avoided by judiciously refraining from trespassing upon the preserves or arousing the ire of males who possess warlike dispositions and tendencies. And Bowen gained great fame without ever having cold lead or hard fists and boots applied to his airy and amorous system.



## VI.

# Power and Pelf

**E**LECTION came. Townley and Bowen were defeated, and could not, by roaring lion-like in legislative halls, compel big business to close their mouths with gags of gold. Political excitement, which loosened the farmers' purse strings, was dying, the purse strings tightening. The Socialistic fever was ebbing as ebbs the tide, and waning as wanes the moon. There was no more demand for oratory. Townley's impassioned pleas and Bowen's cackling clamor could no longer be converted into cash, and they were brought to bay by the economic problem of bread and butter.

Only one avenue of escape from work was open to them. They must continue to save the farmers. But they must be saved with a new remedy, for the old one no longer stimulated them to part with their money.

The farmers had demanded a terminal elevator from the legislature and governor, which they failed to get, and they were aggrieved and angered. The time was ripe for a new act in the drama.

Bowen, as well as Townley, had studied Wells Brinton's methods. And about the time Art organized the league, Bowen started another money-getting association, the foundation principles of which seemed to consist of giving the gaseous Bowen a dollar and a half, and trusting to the Lord and the man who "couldn't look straight" for large returns upon the investment. Townley soon found that Bowen was his competitor in the farmer-saving business, with a cheaper line of remedies. And Bowen discovered that the farmers bit at Townley's \$6 bait as freely as they swallowed his own elixir, at only one dollar and fifty cents a swallow. A combination was formed, for Townley's plan possessed manifest advantages.

An investment of six dollars would give a firmer hold upon the investors. A matter of a dollar and a half might be dismissed from the mind and forgotten. But the man who gave up six dollars would want to get his money's worth. And his faith in Townley and Bowen inspired by a desire to get the value of his cash outlay would be much stronger. He might be induced to contribute more money to protect that six dollars and the returns thereon, as the investor in a worthless mine or the victim of gamblers and confidence men will sink more and more money in the vain hope of recovering what he has lost. And much time and evidence would be necessary to convince him that he had been fooled again.

Men of ability were now needed to collect the money and memberships, and Townley sent forth a call to his fellow leaders of the Socialists. Scratch a Socialist and you find a would-be Capitalist who will desert Socialism as soon as an opportunity to become a capitalist, however small, presents itself. Here was a chance for a stake, and great future possibilities. True, it would wreck the Socialist



party in North Dakota, but what of that? The Socialist party paid \$3 a day. Townley offered \$2 a head for all the farmers who could be caught. Mob psychology was doing its work already, and the farmer fish were rapidly following each other into the net. The Socialist leaders hesitated not a moment. They scrambled for the pie counter, and the Socialist party was deserted of able organizer, agitator, and orator.

Enthusiastic Socialist followers and leaders who were not wanted by Townley, and whose financial welfare depended upon the existence of the Socialist party and the support thereof, were greatly shocked and grieved. They wailed loudly, hurling anathemas at the devoted heads of the deserters, and denouncing them as crooks, thieves, traitors, grafters, sharks, harpies, vultures, and other beasts and birds of prey and plunder.

Silently, and entirely without outcry or blowing of horns the bold band went forth to harvest the farmer, bringing glad tidings of wondrous things that were to be done for his benefit. Of the wealth that would come to him when the leeches who sucked his blood were destroyed, and the honor which would be his when he was elected to the legislature. Terminal elevators would be built and each farmer would save at least eleven hundred dollars a year, of which he was now being robbed by dishonest grading of wheat. The Socialist farmer could embrace the new doctrine without violating his Socialistic convictions. For it was just like Socialism, only better, in that it would make capitalists of all the farmers. The Catholic farmer could be saved and freed without being smeared with the slime of Socialism. The chains that bound the honest and noble farmer would be broken, and from his weary back would be flung the burden that bowed him down. The farmers would form a trust and control the price of wheat, which would bring them great riches, and money would be loaned the farmer at a very low rate, probably two per cent. And all this would be done for the farmer in return for the paltry sum of six dollars. Nor was payment in cash necessary. His note would be accepted, and benefits and blessings in great profusion might be showered upon him before he would be obliged to pay the note.

The organizers were in no wise concerned about the truth of their statements or promises. They wanted that \$2 a head. And a fair specimen of the high examples who made up Townley's force of fleecers was E. E. Pinkham, a socialist of Beach.

Mr. Pinkham did not love to labor. His wife kept boarders, so what was the use of working. In the spring of 1915 he took a trip to Canada. The Beach *Advance*, in wishing him godspeed, cast aspersions upon his intelligence, which has ever since been held up to the editor as proof of his faulty judgment. And, notwithstanding the editor's defense, that fooling the farmers is an evidence of dishonesty, and not of intelligence, his reputation for wisdom suffered.

For Pinkham returned with a tale of great riches to be acquired by the purchase of lots in the town of Peace River Crossing, which town was destined to spread all over the landscape and render wealthy the fortunate owners of city real estate. Merely out of consideration for the welfare of his Socialist comrades, and other worthy persons, he had secured the agency for the sale of the lots.



Brinton provided Pinkham with an office in the Post Office Building, and Pink used the post office lobby as a field in which to lasso seekers after wealth. He quickly became prosperous, and would doubtless have become wealthy had not some of the investors been seized with a desire to gaze upon the fortune they had bought and hid themselves to Canada.

Back they came, wild-eyed and furious, and vowing vengeance. For they had found that their lots were situated eleven miles from the town and on the opposite side of the rushing Peace River. And, moreover, they were located upon a government homestead, which was owned by the Canadian government. Pinkham left town in great haste. But he had already sold \$6,000 worth of lots. Also he had shown that he possessed the necessary and proper qualifications of a Townley organizer. So he was promptly employed by Townley, and organized with great success.



E. E. PINKHAM

It should not be supposed that all of Townley's organizers were as bad as Pinkham. Some of them were worse. They were largely men who were opposed to work, and attracted by superior advantages of working others. Many of them had lived for years by farming the farmers and working the working men. A number were second and third rate lawyers and preachers, who became Socialists for profit and deserted Socialism for something more profitable. And in the whole crowd of farmer fleecers there were two reputable farmers, Wood and McKaig by name, who were lending their aid to Townley, for reasons best known to themselves.

Brinton came, and was royally welcomed by Townley, for his inventive genius and aggressive force were needed, which Bowen could not supply. The work to be done required such qualities as Art and Wells possessed, rather than those owned by the wind harp, the graphophone, or the steam calliope. And thereafter the hawk and the bull-terrier reigned supreme.

The method of securing the money and members was the same as that employed by Brinton in the sale of Chronicle stock, the bell-wether being an important factor. A bell-wether is a more or less masculine sheep who is followed by other sheep, for which reason he



is adorned with a bell whose tinkling tells of the whereabouts of the flock. And to gain the following of the flock, it is only necessary to win and make a follower of the bell-wether. With sheep this may be done by means of sugar. Among men it may be done by anything that is to man what sugar is to sheep.

Among wire-tappers and crooked gamblers who follow circus and fair, the bell-wether is called a capper or shillaber. They are winners of large sums of money, gold watches, and other valuables at the games. And the sheep who follow their lead to fortune are duly and properly fleeced.

So the organizer would interview a prominent farmer in each community and strive to induce him to part with \$6 and join the Townley band. If he was hard to convince by argument, he could be influenced by a promise of office, which means of persuasion had been used with great success by Brinton, or money could be employed as a stronger argument. And having been persuaded, the prominent farmer was used as a leader and bell-wether for the rest of the flock. But his chance of office depended upon his character and intelligence. If he possessed little of either, he was eligible and might be chosen. If he possessed much of both, he was doomed to pine for the office that never came, while an ignorant follower would be selected for the position which the bell-wether had been promised.

Somebody has said that sheep suffer from wolves, not so much by reason of the wolfishness of the wolves, as because of the sheepishness of the sheep. And a sheepish thing about man is his inclination to follow a leader, and let mob psychology rule him instead of reason.

A few men were discussing this sheepishness of man in a town in North Dakota, and they decided upon an experiment. Issuing from a building, they ran at full speed. Some men were at work close by: "Come on," cried the running ones, the others dropped their tools and followed. The crowd of runners quickly increased to a score, and mob psychology commenced to operate. Merchants and clerks left the stores, grimy blacksmiths deserted their anvils to join the speeding procession, together with numerous small boys and dogs. And soon a swollen mob was rushing pell-mell down the street, all firmly believing their cause to be just. Why not? Was not each trying to run faster than the other. Unquestionably it was eminently right and proper, if not the solemn duty, to run with might and main. Otherwise why would everybody be running.

Townley instructed the organizers to talk to the farmers as they would to children. And over the state, from east to west, autoed the organizers, seeking the suckers. The farmers were admonished to keep all knowledge of the movement from the leeches who sucked their blood. And the work proceeded without opposition, until it became known that some thirty or forty thousand farmers had pledged themselves to vote as Townley directed, and paid \$6 for that privilege, which was afterwards increased to \$9, and again raised to \$16.

Then loudly, wildly rang the tocsin bells from the watch towers where the watchers had been sleeping. Fiercely they beat the tom-toms and kettle-drums. "There's a wolf in the pasture," they shouted; "a fire in the hayfield." And Townley's record was laid bare. But the



husbandman's heart was with his \$6, likewise, and moreso with his \$16, and the clash and clang of warning glanced off the hard surface of the farmer like the rays of a searchlight off a rock.

"It's the alarm cries of the leeches who suck the farmers' blood," said Townley & Co. "Pay no attention to them." And the farmer echo replied: "They are sucking our blood and are afraid they will be knocked off our bowed backs. Hooray for the League!" And they clung to Townley and cried, "We'll stick."

Why not?

Did Townley beat, betray, delude, and defraud? Did he extract, extort, plunder, purloin, or steal wealth in large amount from corporation, groceryman, farmer, butcher, baker, and candlestick maker? What more proof would you have of his ability? What better champion and leader could the farmer have than this bold buncaneer? What nobler, safer crusader upon whom to pin his hopes and follow to glory than this gallant knight who had bravely sheared not only sheep, but hardened rams of a quarter million dollars? What more valiant defender against his foes could the farmer desire? The cat is strong, the canary is weak. Let the cat defend the canary.

The time came to nominate candidates for office, and a convention was held in Fargo. The candidates had been already selected by Townley & Co., and were carefully hand picked. For to the end that the purposes, objects, and aims of Townley & Co. might not be obstructed, it would be necessary to have men in the legislature who would be obliged to look to Townley for guidance, for the reason that they would not know enough to do otherwise. And they were chosen with that end in view, though in some of the other offices the state did not fare badly.

Probably to offset the election of incompetents to the legislature, Wm. Langer was elected attorney general, Bill lacks not courage and individuality. He enforced the law in a manner that made him a real terror to evil-doers, and caused many law-breakers to leave the state.

The genial, competent, and highly efficient James R. Waters was appointed to the state bank examiner's office, where he presides with much independence and freedom of thought. And Townley & Co. answer criticism of their state officials by pointing to Bill and Jim.

Townley and a select bunch of orators proceeded to work the farmers up to a frenzy of excitement, and then presented them with the list of candidates. They voted for them, and after making a large donation of cash to Townley & Co., they went home happy in a sense of duty well done.

And now, the prominent farmers, who, influenced by promises of office had bell-wethered their followers into the hands of Townley & Co. received a sad shock. To become a prominent citizen a man must have some intelligence and ability, and such men were not wanted for legislative office by Townley & Co. The disappointed bell-wethers were angry. Some of them tried to bell-wether the flock out of Townley's corral, and were denounced as traitors by those whom they had bell-wethered in. Election came and Townley's forces swept the state.

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Note: The mortgages and judgments recorded against Townley amounted to more than \$400,000, but his actual indebtedness amounts to about \$79,000.



## VII.

### The Raiders' Repulse

THE legislature convened and Townley and Brinton established a throne-room in a hotel in Bismarck. When the hand-picked legislature arrived they were taken into the august presence of Art and Wells and commanded to sign a document which pledged them to obey Townley's orders in all things legislative, and eighty-one representatives and eighteen senators signed the pledge.

This precaution, however, was not needed. For the ignorance of the chosen ones would make it necessary for them to follow somebody. And having given their money to Townley, their interest in that money would cause them to follow his lead. When a bill was introduced, the pledged legislators were given orders and instructions as to how they should vote, which orders most of them obeyed as school children obey their teachers.

Townley & Co. controlled the house of representatives, but a majority of the senators had been elected for a term of four years before the Townley League was organized. And despite the most careful selection, a number of intelligent, or semi-intelligent Townley followers slipped into the legislature, while the hold-over senators represented the highest intelligence of the state.

These senators, knowing the character of Townley & Co., feared that an attempt would be made by them to enrich themselves at the expense of the state, and gather the golden eggs which the geese were laying. Nor were they to be disappointed. The attempt came in the form of a bill to revise the constitution of the state. This did not seem necessary to the intelligent senators, though a better constitution would, of course, not be objectionable.

But when they had duly examined and considered the bill, the senators appeared dazed. Their faces wore looks of incredulity and unbelief, and they gazed at each other and spoke like men who could not believe their senses. Some, with horror-stricken expressions of countenance, went in search of ice water or other stimulant. Then they reared up, pawed the earth, and roared, bawled, and bellowed, long, loud, and fierce. Intelligent Townleyites forgot the money they had given Townley & Co. and added their roars to the chorus. For the bill made possible the grafting of millions.

A state constitution is a set of laws governing the state, the object of which is the greatest good of the people of the state. But the object of the new constitution appeared to be the greatest grafting power of Townley & Co. So let us consider a few of the features of House Bill 44.

It was part of the plans of Townley & Co. to have flour mills, packing plants, and other enterprises built and operated by the state. To provide the money for these enterprises, they proposed to bond the



state, with the sky as the limit, which means that they wished to mortgage everybody's property for as much as possible. And this was provided for by the new constitution. Who would manage these enterprises? The managers would be appointed by Townley & Co. Who would they appoint? Brinton and Pinkham would be well qualified to get the money, though they might not honestly divide the swag with Townley.

The school funds of the state of North Dakota amounted to about \$60,000,000, and the constitution provides that the funds may be invested in U. S. bonds, and the bonds of other states. The new constitution provided for the investment of this fund only in the bonds of the state of North Dakota, which would throw the school money available for investment into the hands of Townley & Co. The constitution also provides that all officers who handle the school funds must give ample bonds, and that any misappropriation of the money or failure to account for it shall be embezzlement and a felony. The new constitution left this out. Such clauses might cause inconvenience to Townley & Co.

The Townley constitution also provided for a law by which county officials would be appointed instead of elected. Who would appoint them? Townley & Co. How much would office-seekers throughout the state be willing to pay for the appointments? Would Townley take the money? Ask any reputable citizen of the town of Beach. This bill was passed in the house and killed by the hold-over senators.

A bill providing for two-cent railroad fare was introduced and passed in the house. The next day it was reconsidered and laid at rest. Townley's tools had evidently been ordered to vote it down. But this was too much for some of the hand-picked and pledge bound legislators, and only sixty-four of the eighty-one voted against it. How much was the killing of a two-cent railroad fare worth to the railroads, and how much could they afford to pay Townley & Co.?

A bill relating to freight rates was introduced and passed in the house. An examination of the bill by the senate showed that it would enable the railroads to fix their own freight rates until changed by a future legislature. How much would it be worth to the railroads to be able to charge what they pleased for the transportation of freight? Townley & Co. were furious over the failure of the bill to pass.

A terminal elevator bill was vetoed by Townley's governor, and Townley's reason for this has never been quite clear. Some say that this bill is to be used as a club with which to force the passing of the Townley graft bill, better known as House Bill 44, in the next legislature.



## VIII.

### The Sorrows of a Serf

TOWNLEY'S governor has been denounced and condemned as being no better than Townley. Yet, in the judgment of not a few of Townley's opponents, he is well-meaning and sincere. And all who have wept over the heart story of "Trilby" or "Uncle Tom's Cabin" may find a subject for their sympathies and tears in the fate of Lynn J. Frazier.

He had lived long in the peaceful security of his farm. Gladsome and gay had he sowed and reaped. Merrily he planted and dug the potato. And blithely he sang as he milked the bossy cow, until the years, slipping softly by, had taken away his hair and increased his girth.

But the tempter came at last. He was lured away from it all by the hawk of Squaw Gap, who bound him and cast him into the governor's dungeon, where he must move and have his being within the tether of his chain, a prey to tormenting doubts. A slave in bright fetters, he smiles and seems content, but his heart is not there. It is wandering over the reaches of that homestead. It hovers over the creek and the spring in the draw, and it follows the soft eyed cows over hollow and hill.

Big and beefy, stolid and slow of body and brain, he impresses the observer as being not unlike a dignified ox. An ox well stabled and bedded, and filled to repletion with alfalfa hay, but haltered, chained and tied. Driven or led at will by his master, who feeds and stables him not because he loves him, but because he believes him to be gentle and well broken and satisfied with his stable, his feed, and his halter. A nice ox, who will not break the chain or jump the fence. A fat, strong, and impressive looking ox, who can be used by his master to advertise his wares, as actresses advertise by parading lions and leopards on the boulevard. Vain with a child's vanity of the honor conferred upon him. Withal, a genial, kindly man, whose pathway is not all strewn with roses.

For, regardless of chain and halter, he must follow close upon his master's heels, through fear of being lost in the jungle, and abandoned to his fate, and obey his every beck and call. To gatherings far and near he must go like an ox to the fair. A living advertisement of the schemes of his master, a living bait for the unwary. He must blunder and flounder through attempted speeches like an ox through the mud, facing the amused smiles and pitying glances of the more intelligent of the crowd, as he stumbles and staggers upon the slippery ground to which he has been driven. And always knowing and fearing the discovery by the public that he is only an ox like Trilby, and Townley a hawk-like Svengali.



Though basking warm in the effulgent glow of gubernatorial glory, he is as one who cannot swim, held above deep water by another upon whose pleasure hangs his fate, and he must shine with a reflected luster that is none of his own.

The homestead had its charms. On the farm he had no master, and wore no halter or chain. The honest struggles and hopes of a man were there. And, perhaps there lurks behind that stolid exterior the longing of the slave to be free.



LYNNE J. FRAZIER



IX.

## The Golden Fleece

ART and Wells had been beaten and balked in their brave attempt to relieve the farmers through the medium of House Bill 44, by the rascally hirelings of big business. And the poor, oppressed farmers were still longing and crying for relief.

So Brinton's genius for organizing corporations and selling stock to farmers was brought into play, and a number of enterprises were organized, the most interesting of which is the Consumers United Store Co. The ideas upon which this corporation is based are truly Brintonian. The plan of relief is so suggestive of Wells, that when a copy of the agreement which the farmers sign came to Beach, it was instantly recognized as his work, and all who read the agreement laughed joyfully, save those farmers who had been previously relieved by Wells, through the sale of *Chronicle* stock and stock in the Beach store. These remained solemn and silent, for there was sorrow and spleen in their hearts. And their faith in farmer saviours had vanished into nothingness.

Yet the Beach store should have been highly satisfactory to all concerned. For Brinton got the money, while the farmers who subscribed for the stock received a liberal education in Townley democracy. The farmers may believe that they paid too much for their education, but that is a debatable question. And their belief should not be accepted without careful consideration, for the advantages of democracy are many and great.

The farmer who buys a certificate in the Townley store for \$100 is to be permitted to buy goods at the store for cash. Ninety per cent of the money collected, up to \$10,000 is to be invested in the store, while all money collected above \$10,000 goes to Townley & Co. But \$20,000 worth of certificates are to be sold before the store is organized, and more than \$30,000 worth of certificates were sold in some of the stores. Therefore, at least \$11,000, and usually \$20,000 or more goes to Townley & Co. before the store is established, and \$9,000 goes into the store—maybe.

The farmer is informed, or would be if he read the agreement, which he probably does not, that the purpose for which he pays his \$100 is to assist in making democracy a real factor in life. This, no doubt, refers to the new kind of democracy which votes as permitted and directed by Townley and Brinton, and pays \$16 for that privilege. And who will say that the right to vote is not worth \$16, or even \$100. Moreover, this form of democracy is doubtless superior to the kind alleged to be practiced in some places, where men are paid to vote as they are told, instead of paying for that privilege.

If Townley's store should fail, all goods in the store at the time of the failure may be sold, and the proceeds divided pro rata among the buyers of certificates, which proves the proposition to be safe, just,



and fair. And if there should be only \$100 worth of goods in the store, each farmer would receive twenty-five cents or less, and should be happy in the knowledge that he has been of great benefit to democracy.

To be sure, the nine thousand dollars may not be invested in the store. Townley and Brinton may not invest more than one thousand dollars in the business. But what of that? The money will be used for democracy anyway, and the farmers will be getting just what they paid for and should be satisfied.

Democracy as a factor in life is worth far more than one hundred dollars to the common people. And, lest some should doubt that it is being sold so cheaply, and bought so freely, a copy of the agreement is here appended. And Townley testified under oath that \$960,000 had been received through the sale of certificates. While Brinton is said to boast of a breath-taking personal bank account that is securely hidden.

### AGREEMENT FOR BUYER'S CERTIFICATE IN THE CONSUMERS UNITED STORES CO.

At.....

1. **We the Undersigned**, for the purposes set forth herein, do each subscribe One Hundred Dollars, to be paid in cash or note, to the Consumers United Stores Company of North Dakota, a corporation to be formed.

2. **It is expressly understood and agreed** that the purposes for which we pay the said sum of One Hundred Dollars are: That ninety per cent of all money subscribed herein shall be used by said company to establish a store at.....until the sum of.....Thousand Dollars, in cash or notes, shall be so applied. All surplus subscribed over the said sum of.....Thousand Dollars may be used by the company either to establish and maintain a central buying agency or wholesale establishment, or to carry on educational work or propaganda along all lines deemed by the board of directors of the Consumers United Stores Company to be in the interest of or beneficial to farmers, and for the assistance of farmers' organizations such as relate to the economic, educational or political interests of the farmers or both.

3. **The Consumers United Stores Company** agrees to establish the store at.....not later than the first day of.....

19..... and will immediately thereafter issue a certificate to each subscriber hereto granting him the right to purchase goods and merchandise at said store, or any other store the said company may establish, and to order the same through the company's stores, by paying the wholesale market price together with the freight charges, plus a margin of not to exceed ten per cent.

4. The Consumers United Stores Company reserves the right to cancel any certificate or certificates upon the payment to the subscribers herein of their subscription fees, less ten dollars for each year for which service has been rendered. The Company further agrees that in the event it shall discontinue the operation of its store at.....within ten years after it shall have begun business, it will redeem all certificates at the rate of ten dollars for each year less than ten that the said store was so operated, and if the assets of such store are not sufficient to redeem all such certificates in full, then the whole amount of the assets of such store shall be divided pro rata among its subscribers.



5. **The purpose of this subscription** is to aid and assist the producers and consumers of this nation in educating themselves to efficient co-operative buying and selling and to assist in making democracy a real factor in our political and economic life.

**Subscribed and signed** on the day and year written above our signatures:

Among the farmers who were rescued in this campaign was J. G. Ingle, who lives twelve miles from Dawson, N. D., and who, after being duly and properly saved, was used as a shillaber. He afterward became dissatisfied and displeased with the Townley plan of salvation. And thus did he relate his experience to H. D. Paulson, of the *Fargo Forum*, to whom belongs the credit for securing the story:



## X.

# The Bawls of a Bell-Wether

I became a member of the Nonpartisan League back in the late summer or early fall of 1915. The organizer approached me while I was working in a field, and I gave him \$9.

While I didn't give the subject much thought then, and not for some time afterwards, I did get to thinking about political affairs quite a bit, and I finally decided, in my own mind, that the Nonpartisan League didn't offer anything in the way of politics not already offered by the old parties. I didn't say much about it, and went along with the boys on the league proposition, satisfied in my own mind that things wouldn't be any worse or any better politically than they had been.

When the store organizer came to me in October, last year, I gave some little consideration to the question, and thought at first that it was a good thing. I gave to him a note for \$100, for which he gave me a receipt.

Well, the organizer got me to go around with him to see the other farmers, and while we were going around, my suspicions became aroused because of the different stories that he would tell to the different men. I was paid \$5 a day for my time by the organizer, and he took me with him to call on my neighbors because of the influence he thought I might have with them. I understand that is the usual plan adopted by the organizers all over the state who are working on the store proposition.

The first thing that aroused my suspicion was the organizer's statement that the company would turn the money back to a person who chanced to leave the community before the ten-year period was up. That is, if a man paid \$100 and stayed in the community only five years, only \$50 of his certificate would be used up, and he would be entitled to the return of \$50. There is nothing like that in the contract, and, of course, the organizer's promise isn't binding on the company.

Another thing that made me mad was the organizer's action in getting \$100 from some farmers and then telling them that the \$100 wasn't any good unless they paid their membership dues to date. That meant that they had to dig up another \$16.

In my own case I had not paid the membership dues, and I wasn't asked to do so. That, too, made me feel that I was simply being used to further the store proposition.

I didn't go into the league with the idea of building up any wild-cat proposition such as this store scheme is.

I couldn't see for the life of me where the farmers were getting any benefit out of this store proposition, and when I saw the organizer trying to get men into the league by getting their \$100, and then



demanding \$16 more, I was pretty hot under the collar. But I didn't say anything.

Well, things went along after the organizer left the Dawson community without much stir. The farmers around Dawson put \$16,500 into the store proposition, and their notes carry eight per cent interest. The store isn't scheduled to be opened till October 1, 1918, so that the company would collect, in reality, \$108 from each farmer before the farmer gets even the privilege of trading at the store for cash. With the eight per cent added, the Dawson district would net \$17,820 to the store company, of which \$1,320 is interest.

When we went up to Bismarck in the early part of December to the meeting of the Farmers' Union, quite a few of the boys were talking about this store proposition, and we decided to try to get some more information.

We had a meeting there with Art LeSeuer, and Jim Manahan, in the Grand Pacific Hotel.

LeSeuer told us (we were all Farmers' Union men) that he drew up the greement that we had signed, but he pleaded ignorance of it, saying he had forgotten what it really did provide. He told us a story or two and then went away on an early train.

Jim Manahan stayed with us the rest of the night—clear to midnight. Jim said he didn't know anything about the store and told us a lot of funny stories. That was all we could get.

Right there we made up our minds that we wanted to see Townley and get this story straight. At that meeting there was myself and Shipley, Montgomery, Fay Harding, Frank Mehring, and several other boys who I can't just now remember.

We told Shipley, our Union secretary, to correspond with Townley about getting a meeting with him to talk about this store question. Well, it took us a long time to get any satisfaction, but finally we got together with Townley on the night of January 28, in a room up in the Grand Pacific Hotel in Bismarck.

The engagements for the meeting were made between Mr. Lemke, of the league, and Mr. Shipley.

The Union directors and myself talked the whole thing over before we went into the meeting with Townley. On January 26, a man by the name of Tiegan, living up in Bottineau County, I think it is, gave us a copy of the contract. That was the first time I had seen one since the organizer had it, and I never had had any chance to study it much.

On the night of January 23, at eight o'clock, we were in the Grand Pacific Hotel, and Townley brought along a whole lot of his friends. It seemed to me there were fifty of them, and, while I can't remember all of them, I do remember that Governor Frazier was in the crowd.

Townley hadn't gotten into the room hardly, before he got mad. I could tell that he was mad clean through, and he was mad the whole night long.

Townley had asked that everything be kept secret and we had expected to meet only himself.

However, we threshed things out with the whole bunch for several hours, and it was midnight before we were able to get down to a meeting with Townley himself. The others left—all except



one fellow, a rather nice looking, clean shaven young fellow, who Townley told us was his secretary. He asked that we let him stay with Townley and we decided to do so. We were, after midnight, in session only with Townley and his secretary, and eight or nine Farmers' Union members, directors, and officers.

The first thing that we did after we got Mr. Townley alone was to ask him to take the store proposition away from the league, because we were afraid it would hurt the league.

He refused to do so.

Well, sir, he told us that the store proposition didn't have any direct connection with the league, but that indirectly it did, and I guess if you read the contract over you will find that is the case.

We all held to the proposition that the league would be harmed by this store game, and we wanted to see the league go on to success.

Then we asked Townley that if he wouldn't take it away from the league to put it on a solid foundation—a business basis, like the Rochdale plan. So that when a man put \$100 in it he would have some stock—something to show for his money.

Then Townley claimed that if he did that—put it on the Rochdale plan—they would keep him on the witness stand all the time answering questions.

I then handed a copy of the contract to Shipley, and he handed it to Townley. I asked if that was a true copy of the contract, and he said it was.

We got to talking about the store at Kenmare, where Mr. Townley said 600 farmers had taken certificates. That meant collections there of \$60,000.

Then I said to Mr. Townley: "According to your own statement we only put \$9,000 into the store."

He answered "yes."

"Then what is to become of the other \$51,000," I asked.

Townley stepped up to me, shook his fist under my nose, and said it was none of my G—— damned business.

"That is none of your G—— damned business," is the way he put it.

"Well," I says to him, "I am making it my business."

Mind you, I had put \$100 of my own money into this store proposition.

Well, we kept on talking about the store proposition, up one side and down the other, but we always got back to the question of what was going to be done with the surplus money. Finally Townley seemed to be getting good and mad, and standing up there in front of us, he hollered:

"You farmers are a set of G—— damn hogs. We have got to drive you to the polls with a —— elm club to make you vote."

"Here," says I, "I am a farmer, and I have never been driven to the polls. I might be coaxed, but not driven."

Then we went back to the store proposition. We kept talking about the surplus, our questions always getting back to that proposition.

Then Townley busted loose again:



"If this store question should go bust today you G——— damned farmers have got your money's worth," he shouted.

"Yes, in experience, by signing notes," I told him right back again. He didn't have anything to say to that.

It got along toward four o'clock in the morning and Townley's secretary saw that things weren't going very good and he was trying to get Townley out of the room. He had his overcoat on, and I can't just remember what did take place, or what was said, but all of a sudden Townley struck George Sorber on the chest.

It was no gentle tap, either, and Townley evidently expected to have a fight, for he jumped back and threw his overcoat off, dropping it on the floor.

Montgomery picked the coat up and Townley put it back on again. Sorber and Townley had been talking about the Rochdale store plan about half an hour before the mixup took place, but I can't say just what was said one way or the other that led up to Townley's resorting to violence.

This is the story of the all-night meeting in Bismarck.

J. G. INGLE.

And now the aforetime and aforesaid bell-wether is convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that Townley & Co. are not saviours at all, but grafters who shamelessly shear both sheep and shillaber.



## XI.

# Both Ends Against the Middle

*"Fillet of a fenny snake  
In the cauldron boil and bake  
Eye of newt and toe of frog,  
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,  
Lizard's leg and owl's wing,  
Adder's fork and blind worm's sting;  
For a charm of powerful trouble,  
Like a hell broth boil and bubble."*

THE principles, precepts, purposes, and beliefs of Townley & Co. form a wonderful kettle of fish. Yet the money-getting merit of the mess cannot be denied. For it appeals to all tastes, beliefs, prejudices, and convictions. It is pork to the Gentile, and beef to the Jew, potheen to the Irish, and beer to the German, pea soup to the French, ludefisk to the Scandinavian, and tamale to the Greaser. And out of the odorous pot-pourri, Townley & Co. will ladle anything you want for your \$16, which ought to be considered fair enough.

Among Germans, Townley & Co. are believed to be pro-German. With pacifists they are opposed to the war. And among supporters of our President and Congress, Townley & Co. are intensely patriotic.

When harvesting the farmers, they are violently opposed to the fixing of the price of wheat by the Government. While gathering the laboring men into their net, they disapprove of the sordid, grasping disposition of the farmers who refuse to pay five or six dollars a day for labor, and want a high price for wheat, which means high priced flour and bread for the poor working man. In Minneapolis they extend to the I. W. W. the hand of friendship and support. In North Dakota they pass a law making sabotage a crime punishable by imprisonment for life.

Accuse Townley & Co. of being opposed to the war and they point to the Townley newspaper, *The Courier News*, which publishes strongly patriotic editorials and warmly supports our President and Congress.

Accuse them of supporting the war and the government, and they quote Townley's speeches in which he denounced the war as a conspiracy of damned pirates to enrich themselves by the blood and slaughter of their fellowmen. A plot of fiends who, while gloating over their blood-stained profits, laugh at the dead and the dying, the tears of widows and orphans, and the mothers' sobs of pain. When arrested for such utterances, Townley means German pirates, of course, and not Americans.

The belief of Germans, pro-Germans, and pacifists, that Townley & Co. are opposed to the war is false, declare some of their followers. Look at the editorials in *The Courier News*, and remember that Townley slapped LaFollette on the back to remind him that he had gone beyond the limit of patriotism.



All assertions that Townley & Co. favors the war are base slanders, declare other followers. Townley has denounced the war in unmeasured terms, and he patted LaFollette on the back to encourage him and show his approval to all the world.

Townley & Co. are at once patriotic and disloyal, pro-German and anti-German, pro-war and anti-war, depending upon what policy will get the sixteen dollars. And the published assertion that Townley leans towards Germans, pro-Germans, and pacifists are not strictly true. For he only leans towards them far enough to reach their pockets, after which he assumes an attitude of perpendicular patriotism.

The farmers are now safely hooked and must follow Townley & Co. in the hope of getting something for their \$16. And the eyes of Townley & Co. are now said to be turned upon the iron mines of Northern Minnesota, where the great steel industry obtains raw material. Ability to kill a two-cent railroad fare in North Dakota was something. But what of the power to hold up Morgan and Rockefeller, and say to those giants: Your money or this law will or will not be passed.

All too often it is a just grievance which makes the farmer an easy victim of the farmer-saviour. The price of wheat is fixed and must not advance, while the price of cotton is allowed to soar skyward, and the price of barbed wire and other iron and steel products goes up and up. Is this fair or just? asks the farmer. No! No! brother of our hearts, cries Townley and Brinton. It is wrong! wrong! wrong! But give us sixteen dollars for membership fees, one hundred dollars for a certificate in the store, buy stock in our other enterprises, and this monstrous injustice will soon be righted.

Likewise, the wage-worker often feels aggrieved. The growers of wheat and cotton have profited much by the advanced prices, while his wages, as measured in the things that he must buy, have not increased as he believes they should. True, he receives three dollars and fifty cents a day where formerly a wage of two dollars and fifty cents was paid. But he must pay ten cents for a loaf of bread which formerly sold for five cents. A pair of overalls which he used to buy for seventy-five cents now costs two dollars or more, and he feels that he is not being fairly treated.

Join us! cry Townley and Brinton. Give us what money you can and vote as we direct. Come into the talons of the hawk of Squaw Gap and we will raise your wages and lower the cost of bread, meat, and clothing.

The support of labor is necessary to gain control of Minnesota. And now Townley & Co. are opposed to high priced wheat in Minnesota, and opposed to low priced wheat in North Dakota. And, while Townley's Nonpartisan leader in North Dakota declared the price of \$2.20 for wheat too low and demanded a higher price, Townley sent this telegram to President Wilson, from St. Paul:

"Do not be misinformed by politicians. The farmers of the Northwest cheerfully acquiesce in your decision fixing wheat prices on the basis of the 1917 crop."

This telegram is said to have caused the defeat of the Gore



amendment, which proposed to raise the price to \$2.50. And Townley's congressman, John Baer, voted for this amendment, thus properly placing Townley & Co. on both sides of the fence.

Townley wanted high priced wheat. John Baer voted for it, says the North Dakota farmer who reads only the Nonpartisan *Leader*.

Townley wants low priced wheat for the benefit of the working-man, and so telegraphed President Wilson, says the wage-earner who reads the city newspapers and labor papers.

Upon Townley's opposition to high priced wheat, the Minneapolis *Tribune* commented thus:

"Mr. Townley announces his opposition to the proposal of Congress to raise the price of wheat. Mr. Townley is at least consistent in his opposition to anything proposed by the government."

Wrong again! Why will newspapers take so narrow a view of a hard working man? Why not treat him fairly and say that he is opposed to high priced wheat in the cities where the laboring voters buy flour, and opposed to low priced wheat in the farming districts where the farmers sell wheat, and that he is only opposed to the government when such opposition is necessary to get the money and votes? He can prove his loyalty to the government as strongly as he can prove his disloyalty, and prove his support of the war as convincingly as he can prove his opposition to the war. Nor will farmers with that \$16 in mind, doubt his word when he explains that the statement that he favors low priced wheat is a gross misrepresentation, an infamous lie told by big business.

The Socialist followers of Townley & Co. were won over to them by their leaders. The democratic and republican followers were secured by promises and bell-wethers. The Germans, pro-Germans, and pacifists were gathered in by opposition to the war. And now the patriotic loyalists must be won by loud protestations of loyalty and support of the government.

Wherefore, news items like the following, from *The Windom Reporter*, may now be seen in the newspapers:

"A big Nonpartisan rally was held at Worthington last week, at which A. J. Bowen, one of the best speakers of the league, made a grand spread-eagle patriotic address, much different from his talks in Jackson County a year ago. Those fellows can talk, and they are fast learning to make their speeches over to fit the time and place."

Likewise, the wage-workers must be won by opposition to high priced wheat, and promises of the things they desire.

Like the Socialist, the wage-worker follows a leader, and his leader will be won by promise of office or influenced otherwise, and used as a bell-wether for the flock, as were the prominent farmers of North Dakota. And, like the farmers, the labor bell-wethers will be disappointed in their hopes of office and should secure the reward for their services in advance. For an office of power or importance to Townley & Co. they will not get if they own much character or mental ability. Nor could the man who beat his grocery bills be expected to pay a political debt after election.

The laboring follower of leaders should remember the money possessed by Townley & Co., and their great power to influence leaders, however prominent, and before being bell-wethered into the hands



of Townley & Co., he should demand a share of the bell-wether's reward.

Townley came back to Beach in 1917. When he went away two years before he had little but his dreams. But when he returned he had gathered millions, and the governor of the state was trailing along behind him as captives were trailed behind the chariots of the Roman conquerors.

There are many German-Americans in Golden Valley County, and in the afternoon Townley delivered one of his anti-war speeches, of which the following is a sample:

"We are willing to give our lives for democracy. But are we fighting for democracy or to make millionaires? Let us be sure that we are fighting for democracy and not to make millionaires. Why should we buy Liberty Bonds? You, and your children, and their children must work and toil to pay for these war bonds."

All who were opposed to the war were greatly pleased with Townley's speech. And many of them joined the league, glad to give \$16 to the man who was brave enough to openly and publicly declare his opposition to the war. But angry denunciations and threats of arrest and personal violence by loyal citizens were heard around the town.

In the evening Townley remained in the hotel and Governor Frazier delivered an address on patriotism. In a rambling, disconnected speech, he implored his hearers to be patriotic, buy war bonds and stand squarely behind our President in this righteous war.

Next day on the street in Beach, thus spake a well known farmer to Pete Erickson, who is also a well known farmer, and a \$16 member of Townley's league: "Did you hear that speech of Townley's? He is against this damn war and ain't afraid to get up and say so. I'm going to join the league. Townley can have my sixteen dollars, and more if he wants it. That Frazier is no good, but he don't know anything anyway, and I'll stick with the league on account of Townley."

"To hell with Townley," replied Pete. "He's crazy and always was. I'm a patriot, and if Townley ain't a traitor he might as well be one. That speech finishes him with me. But Frazier is a patriotic American, and I'll stick with the league on account of Frazier."

Which illustrates the advantages of being on both sides of the fence and playing both ends against the middle.

But suspicion suddenly flashed into Pete's mind, for he is no fool, and he said in a calmer tone: "I wonder if Townley is working us both for suckers?"

FINIS







